

Rickmansworth Waterways Trust

Strolls from the Lock Number 6 – To Croxley Green

Time approximately 1 hr 40 minutes

Distance 4.75 miles approx.

From the Lock Centre, turn right, and go up the steps to the road. Turn right, and pass the old building on the road, which used to be a pub 'The Railway Inn', intended mainly for the canal trade. Travis Perkins, on the other side of the River Chess, used to be the site of the original Rickmansworth Railway Station. Walk through the churchyard, on the far side of the petrol station. St Mary's Church was rebuilt in 1898, although the tower is from the original church of the 13th century. Next to the church is the old medieval priory, and the 17th century 'Feathers' public house. Further along the road is yet another pub, the Old Kings Arms, now offices. There used to be a large number of pubs in Rickmansworth, beyond that required by the local population. This reflects on the amount of canal traffic and the importance of this town as a place to unload or change horses.

The road passes over the Town Ditch, a tributary of the River Chess. On the left here is the Old Vicarage, a delightful collection of old buildings. Turn right at the next lights. You will pass Basing House, now a museum, on the left, next to the library. Set back from the road, it has a plaque noting that William Penn -after whom Pennsylvania, USA, is named - lived here between 1672 and 1677. Further on, next to the church on the left, is Gable House, formerly the local school, with a plaque marked '1847' over the door. The road on the right is called Town Wharf/Wharf Lane, and refers to the days when there was canal access to gas works, near the present gas holders, for coal delivery. The Elms, part of a school which you pass on the right, is where the author George Eliot spent several summers in the countryside, away from London. There is a statue of Joan of Arc directly in front.

Turn right at Caravan Lane, immediately before the railway bridge over the road. This passes over the River Chess, and shortly after, turn left under the railway bridge. Keep to the left into Lavrock Lane. When you reach the main road, turn left and cross over after about 100 yards, into Scotsbridge playing fields. On your right, across the river, is Scotsbridge Mill, now a restaurant. This was a fulling and corn mill in the 16th and 17th centuries. Between 1745 and 1805, it converted to papermaking, one of several in Rickmansworth at the time. It was forced to close in 1881 because it polluted the River Chess. Much later (1927), MGM had a film studio on the site.

Walk past the children's playground to the left and the green shed on the right, through the white barrier and along the bank of the River Chess. This is a chalk stream, fed by ground water stored in the chalk sub strata. Like other chalk streams, it is shallow and narrow with a gravel base and clear warm water. Watercress grown in this river was sent to London via the railway next to the lock centre.

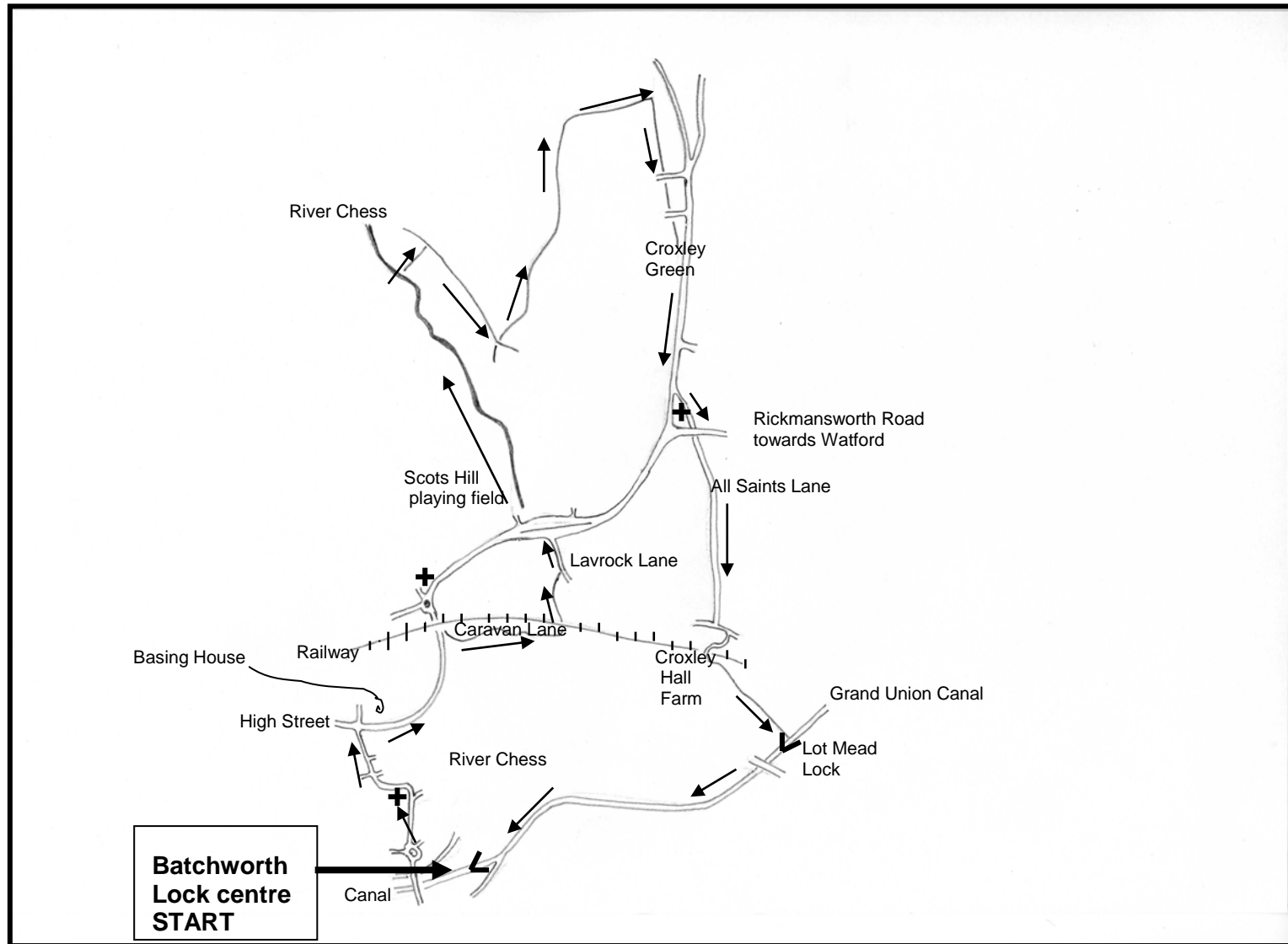
After about ¼ mile, cross over the river by the footbridge, and continue to a T-junction of paths. Go R (footpath #2). At the open field a little further on, take the left hand path by the hedge, which has a signpost marked 'Public footpath #7 to Loudwater Lane, Croxley Green'. After 15mins, there are some steps, and then the path exits onto Croxley Common. Barbara Woodhouse, of dog training fame, lived near here. This is where the Croxley Green Revels are held in June each year, immortalised by John Betjeman in the film 'Metroland' (1973).

Turn right, and walk alongside the hedge, passing two pubs -the 'Coach and Horses' and the 'Artichoke'- and a war memorial. At this point, cross the road to pass to the left of the church. This leads to Rickmansworth Road, where you should cross to All Saints Lane, directly opposite. Follow this unmade road for about ½ mile, through woods enlivened with bluebells in spring, to a T-junction and turn left (Public footpath #11). Keep to the right, go across the railway bridge (Public footpath #12) to Croxley Hall Farm, and take the track to the left (Public footpath #30), which leads to the canal at Lot Mead Lock. Turn R onto the canal towpath, walking past houseboats, now on both sides of the canal, to arrive back at the lock centre in about 15 minutes.

These walks are written by Jillian Christensen and are provided free by The Rickmansworth Waterways Trust but a minimum donation of 20p is suggested to help support our education programme. Thank you!

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